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DSi
Down
Syndrome
International



International
Disability
Alliance



Embracing
Diversity
Catalina Devandas Aguilar
UN Special Rapporteur on the rights
of persons with disabilities



WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY
21ST MARCH 2018

What I bring to my community

ما أحضر إلى مجتمعي

我带给我的社区

Ce que j'apporte à ma communauté

Что я приношу в сообщество

Lo que traigo a mi comunidad

**Enabling all persons with Down syndrome to speak up on how they can contribute
and live fulfilling lives, fully included in the community**

Side Event at the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council

Date: **Wednesday, 21 March, 2018**

Summary Document

Produced by **Down Syndrome International**

Thank you

On behalf of Down Syndrome International and all the self-advocates that presented at the event, a thanks to the Permanent Mission of Brazil for sponsoring the event and to the Permanent Missions of Israel, the United Kingdom and India for co-sponsoring it. Thanks also to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Disability Alliance for their support. Finally thanks to everyone who attended the event.

About this document

There were four main topics covered in the event: self-advocacy; contribution to community; employment; and political participation. This document will give an overview of the key issues around each topic and then give recommendations for State Parties.

1. Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy, being able to represent oneself and advocate for one's rights, is incredibly important for people with Down syndrome. People with Down syndrome have for a long time had their voices suppressed and as a result are one of the most marginalised groups in most countries.

State Parties that have ratified the UNCRPD have an obligation to “consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities” (including people with Down syndrome) “in the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities” (Article 4.3).

Recommendations for State Parties

- Ensure the inclusion of self-advocates with Down syndrome in decision making and consultative processes at local, regional, national and international levels.
- Consider supporting self-advocacy training for people with Down syndrome, especially if there is not an active self-advocacy presence locally.

2. Contribution to Community

People with Down syndrome can and do make meaningful contributions throughout their lives, whether in schools, workplaces, living in the community, public and political life, culture, media, recreation, leisure and sport. But for this to happen, **inclusion is fundamentally important!**



Pearl Lüthy - self-advocate, New Zealand:

I believe that people with Down syndrome are clever and creative. They should be allowed to go to school with their friends. They can do good jobs. They should be able to live where they want. They should be able to go out where they want. And people with Down syndrome should be able to get married and have babies and a family.

Recommendations for State Parties

- Ensure children with Down syndrome are able to access good quality inclusive education.
- Promote the right of people with Down syndrome to live and be included in their communities, including providing adequate support services.

3. Employment

People with Down syndrome make excellent employees in a variety of roles and industries. Studies and employer testimonies show that they have low absenteeism rates, commit to roles for long periods of time, and are enthusiastic team members.

But employment rates of people with Down syndrome remain low. This is partly due to prejudice and discrimination, but also because employers are not confident about how to include people with Down syndrome into their workforce. Supported employment programmes that work with employers and people with Down syndrome during transitions into work have proven very successful, but have not been scaled up.



Damian Bright - self-advocate, Switzerland (currently studying to become a teaching assistant):

In my work with children, I have patience. I am really happy to spend time with the kids in the school class, and with my training I want to make inclusive education more popular in Switzerland.

Recommendations for State Parties:

- Ensure effective anti-discrimination legislation is in place with regards to employment, including adequate sanctions.
- Replicate and scale up successful supported employment programmes for people with Down syndrome

4. Political participation

People with Down syndrome represent a population of potential voters and activists, but require accessible information to ensure they are able to participate meaningfully in politics.



**David O'Brien - self-advocate,
Ireland:**

*We have to be listened to and not
discriminated against. We understand
things the same as everyone else.*

Recommendations for State Parties

- Ensure that people with Down syndrome are legally able to vote and that all government officials and election officials are aware of this.
- Ensure that all information and material related to elections is accessible to people with Down syndrome, including providing easy read versions.

More Information

For more information on any of the issues covered above, please contact Down Syndrome International:

Website: www.ds-int.org

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